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## Sermon for Good Friday.

JOHN 3, 14. 15.

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O Darkest Woe!  
Ye tears, forth flow!  
Has earth so sad a wonder?  
God the Father's only Son  
Now lies buried yonder!

These lines tell us in part the story of Good Friday and roll up before us the saddest scene recorded in human history. The innocent, sinless Son of God gives up His life for the guilty, the Righteous for the unrighteous, the Creator for the creature, the Holy One for sinners! Has earth so *sad* a wonder?

Well might the sun in darkness hide  
And shut his glories in,  
When God, the mighty Maker, died  
For man the creature's sin.

But hark! Amidst the clamor, shouts, mockings, and blasphemies of the rabble of Jerusalem that stood around the cross and gloried in the condemnation of Jesus of Nazareth, there comes from the lips of the dying Savior the sweetest message that has ever sounded in sinners' ears: "It is finished!" What was finished?

Love's redeeming work was done,  
Fought the fight, the battle won!

By His death upon the cross Jesus gained for us salvation. Has earth so *glad* a wonder? Now the earnest, urgent invitation goes out into all the world: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth!" Is. 45, 22.

The scene on Golgotha is typified by an event in the early history of Israel. The Israelites were in the wilderness on their way to Canaan. They had not gone very far, however, before they began to

long and lust again for the flesh pots of Egypt. They rebelled against God and Moses, saying: "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread," Numb. 21, 5. The anger of the Lord was kindled, and He resolved to severely punish them for their black ingratitude. He sent among them fiery serpents which bit them, "and much people of Israel died." Frightened at the destruction which the serpents had wrought they acknowledged their sins and besought the Lord for mercy. He with whom there is plenteous forgiveness heard the cry of His people and commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass and to set it upon a pole. To this command He added the promise of healing and life to everyone that would look up at the serpent. And it came to pass that whosoever obeyed the command and believed the promise was delivered from death and saved. There was life for a look.

In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus refers to this event in the wilderness as a type of His crucifixion when He says: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up," etc. The points of comparison between the Israelites and the human race are these: Like the Israelites we have been bitten and must die from the serpent's bite. Like them, we have been mercifully saved from death. As in their case so in ours, there is life for a look.

Let us this day gather around the cross of Christ and in accordance with our text concentrate our hearts and thoughts on these words:

**LIFE FOR A LOOK,** noting

1. *Because of a look life was lost.*
2. *For a look life is restored.*

**1.**

Like the Israelites, we have been bitten, and the bite is mortal; we must die. Eden was blasted, sin and death entered, life and salvation were sold because of a look. How so? Yonder in Eden man was walking in holy, sinless innocence by the side of his Maker. God had given our first parents full liberty to eat of all the trees in the garden, except of the tree of knowledge. Concerning that God had said: "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." But Satan, who had forsaken his first estate and risen in rebellion against God, dragging with him legions of angels into perdition, looked with jealous eyes upon the perfect happiness of the inhabitants of Eden and began to plot and plan their destruction. In the form of a serpent he crawled into their presence and sowed the seed of unbelief and rebellion into their hearts by contradicting God's word. "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the



garden?" was the cunning question. Hath God said ye shall die if ye eat thereof? No, "ye shall not surely die." And they believed Satan's word rather than God's. He directed their attention to the forbidden tree. They had looked at it before without a sinful desire. Now it fascinated, charmed them. Satan's words had struck root in their hearts. They believed they should "be as gods, knowing good and evil." They looked, and there was death in that look. They desired the fruit, and there was death in that desire. They took and ate, and there was death in the taking and eating, death, because God had said to Adam: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." For this one cursed covetous look man had sold himself, sold his heaven with its life and bliss. Eternal separation from God, death, and damnation became his lot, all because of this covetous look. By that one sinful look Adam dug his own grave and the graves of all his children for all generations. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. 5, 12.

Sinner, whether you believe it or not, you have been bitten by the hellish serpent. Sin, the poison from the serpent's tooth, is in you. It has permeated your entire nature to such an extent that the very imagination of man's heart is only evil from his youth. Every child of Adam must now sorrowfully confess with David, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," Ps. 51, 5. You think, and there is sin in your thought; you desire, and there is sin in your desire; you speak, and there is sin in your words; you act, and there is sin in your deeds. Everything that the natural, unconverted man undertakes is saturated with the poison of sin.

That cursed, damnable look created a gulf between God and man and caused their separation. Sin separates and excludes from God and heaven. Ask Him: "O Thou just and holy God, man has rebelled against Thee, leagued himself with Thine enemy, broken Thy Law, sold himself and the life Thou gavest him for an apple-bite to the devil: wilt Thou reinstate the transgressor of Thy Law, the rebel of Thy kingdom, the guilty culprit for whose sake a world is cursed? Wilt Thou again make him Thy companion, the loved tiller of heaven's soil?" And the answer comes: "Between me and him there is a gulf. Sin has separated us. In wickedness have I no pleasure; with me no evil shall dwell."

As in the case of the Israelites so in ours death was the awful result of the serpent's bite. "And much people of Israel died." Because of a covetous look Adam brought death and damnation upon himself and the entire human race. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," die temporally, die spiritually, die eternally. Yes, because of a look death came, and life was lost. Death is now the

wages of sin. Should not this truth fill our hearts with hatred against sin? Tell me, what does a man gain by sinning? What does he get for it? What does the worshiper of the creature rather than the Creator gain by his idolatry? Death, says the Lord. For "cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord," Jer. 17, 5. What does it profit a man to take God's name in vain? Death is the reward. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain, Ex. 20, 7. What does the despiser and rejecter of preaching and God's Word gain by his unbelief? Death, says the Lord. "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee," Hos. 4, 6. What does he get who despises his parents and masters, and provokes their anger? Death, says the Lord. "The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it," Prov. 30, 17. To the murderer and adulterer, to the thief, slanderer, and covetous—death! "Be not deceived," says the apostle, "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. 6, 9. 10.

You ask, Does God punish sin so severely? Must I perish hopelessly because I break God's command in one point? Yes, for every transgression in thought, word, and deed, for sins of commission as well as for sins of omission there is curse and wrath, death and damnation, separation from God, and that eternally, and all this because of that one cursed covetous look!

But if we wish to see the awful consequences of that covetous look, follow me to Calvary. Behold there the Only-Begotten of the Father lifted up on the cross to atone for our sins with His blood, that He might restore us to life. Who can look at the cross and not see in it the horrors of sin? Who does not see in that "bleeding head and wounded" the work which sin had wrought?

Ye who think of sin but lightly,  
Nor suppose the evil great,  
Here may view its nature rightly,  
Here its guilt may estimate.  
Mark the sacrifice appointed!  
See who bears the awful load;  
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,  
Son of man and Son of God.

Because of a covetous look life was lost, and *so lost* that no sinner can ever live again, except God gives him life. *That* life is in His Son who was lifted up on the cross. He gives it, and gives it for a look. *For a look life is restored.*



2.

The Israelites were mercifully saved from the death that was caused by the serpents' bites. Look how they writhe under the excruciating pain which the deadly poison that mingled with their blood produced. Hear their groans and lamentations. Certain death stares them in the face. By human agency no cure can possibly be effected. Moses and Aaron who had astonished the Egyptians with the wonders they wrought stand helpless. But when human help fails and comfort flees, there rises before their wondering eyes a serpent of shining brass lifted up on a pole. Moses directs the dying multitude to it, and declares that God had promised life to everyone of the bitten that would look.

In like manner have we been mercifully saved from the death caused by the bite of the hellish serpent. "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." And why must He be lifted up on the cross? Why must He bleed and die? Because without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin; because there is salvation in none other. I want you to observe that God is just. His justice must be satisfied before He can show mercy. According to His justice He must punish sin, the broken Law must be fulfilled, death, hell, and the devil must be crushed, forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation must be purchased. *Man must be ransomed.* How was this to be done? All the principalities and powers in heaven and on earth combined could not give to God a ransom for man's sins or atone for his transgressions. To redeem man was such a stupendous task that none but God Himself could undertake it, and He did undertake it. Moved by love to His Father and to the dying, perishing sinner world, the Son of God, coequal and coeternal with the Father, took up into His divinity the human nature, and became like unto us in all things, sin excepted. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Our sins were imputed to Him. He bore the sins of the world in His body on the tree. Because *He* gave Himself a ransom for all, God could be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. Thus, then, that we might be lifted up to God and heaven, Jesus was lifted up on the cross. That we might live, He died. Hear it, and rejoice, ye sinners, one and all: By His perfect, sinless life, by His perfect obedience, by His meritorious sufferings and death, by His glorious resurrection, by His triumphant ascension, Jesus, our Redeemer, *has* rendered full and perfect atonement for our sins, perfectly fulfilled all the demands of the Law, perfectly satisfied all justice, perfectly reconciled us to God, fought and conquered all our foes, and has merited for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, life, and salvation. By His death He purchased life for us. He became our substitute. "When I was a boy," says one, "I saw a sight which I can never

forget—a man tied to a cart and dragged before the eyes of the people through the streets of his native city, his back torn and bleeding from the lashes. It was a shameful punishment. For many offenses? No, for one offense. Did any of the townsmen offer to divide the lashes with him? No; he who committed the offense bore the penalty of a changing human law.—When I was a student at college, I saw another sight which I can never forget—a man brought out to die. His arms were pinioned, his face already pale as death. Thousands of eager eyes were on him as he came up from jail in sight. Did any man ask to die in his stead? Did any friend loose the rope and say: Put it around my neck, let me die in his stead? No; he underwent the sentence of the law. For many offenses? No, he paid the highest penalty of a changing human law for one crime.—I saw another sight, it matters not when or where, myself a sinner standing on the brink of everlasting ruin, deserving naught but death. For *one* sin? No, for many, many offenses, committed against the unchanging Law of God. But again I looked and saw Jesus, my Substitute, scourged and lashed for me, dragged through the streets for me, condemned to death for me, lifted up on the cross for me, bleeding and dying for me. I looked, believed, and was forgiven, and I come to tell you of Jesus who gave His life for you, that you, too, may look and live.”<sup>1)</sup>

That life which Jesus has purchased by His death upon the cross He offers to all in the Gospel on the easiest terms. You ask, What are these terms? and I, too, will comply with them. Must I weep and moan? You may do so because of your sins, but not to obtain life. Must I pray and wrestle and fight? You may do that, but not in order to secure life. Must I lead a moral, virtuous life? Certainly, but not in order to share in the redeeming work of Christ. What did the serpent-bitten Israelites do to be healed? They believed the promise of God, looked as they were directed, and—lived. Jesus has indeed purchased life for us, but we cannot purchase it from Him by penitent tears, works, or prayers. It is free. *It is given for a look.* If a man could secure anything else on such easy terms, would he not look? If a sick man could be healed from a disease by only looking at the physician, instead of undergoing a dangerous operation or taking his pills, would he not look? If a man in a burning building could save himself from the consuming flames by looking, would he not look? If a beggar could secure riches by merely looking at the treasures in a bank vault, would he not look? If a condemned criminal could save himself from the gallows and secure the Governor’s pardon by looking, would he not look? Yet, what is all this compared to what Jesus gives for a look

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1) Quoted from memory.



at Him! Hear it, ye who are groaning under the burden of sin and a guilty conscience: Ye are sin-sick, your sickness is unto death; but He who was lifted up for you on the cross, the heavenly Physician, has healed all your diseases. Look unto Him and live! You are in a burning world, on the brink of a burning ruin; but He who was lifted up for you on the cross has delivered you from the consuming fire of hell. Look unto Him and escape! You are a beggar before God. You can lay no claim to the treasures of the Father's house; but He who was lifted up for you on the cross is rich, rich over all, blessed forever. Look unto Him, and what He possesses is yours. You are a condemned criminal, sentenced to everlasting death; but He who was lifted up for you on the cross has secured for you a full and free pardon. Look, sinner, look unto Him and be forgiven. O what glad tidings of joy! Forgiveness and righteousness for a look! Heavenly, eternal riches, Christ and all that Christ has—for a look! Life everlasting, heaven's bliss and glory and crown—*all for a look!*

But what kind of a look must that be? Not a look to Sinai with its thunder and lightning and thick clouds, but a look to Golgotha. Not a look inward, into your heart; if you do, you are lost; but a look upward at Him who was lifted up on the cross, a look unto Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of your faith. Whosoever *believeth in Him* shall not perish, but have everlasting life. It must be a *believing* look, a look of *faith*. For such a look life that was lost is restored.

In life and in death let us hold the cross of Christ before our eyes. Thither let us flee with all our sins. In the wounds of the crucified Jesus let us hide ourselves. There it is best for us to be. To Him let us look and be saved.

There is life for a look  
At Him who there hangs;  
There is life at this moment for thee.  
Therefore look, sinner, look  
At Him and be saved,  
At Him who from sin maketh free!

Amen.

N. J. B.

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## Sermon for Easter Sunday.

2 TIM. 1, 10.

“Let us keep the feast! *Let us keep the feast!*”—that is St. Paul's joyous invitation to the whole Christian Church to-day. “Let us keep the feast!”—that is the invitation and exhortation which was heard in many a Christian home this morning; father or

mother, brother or sister inviting their households to celebrate Easter in a becoming manner. "Let us keep the feast!"—that will be spoken again and again to-day wherever the Prince of Life is known and adored. "Let us keep the feast!"—that was the thought of our hearts as we hurried to this house of worship this morning. "Let us keep the feast!"—that is my greeting to you even now.

And how are we to keep the feast? By singing and speaking the praises of Him who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. We keep the feast when we proclaim the glory of the Easter Hero and the blessings of His eternal Easter victory. That is done in the words of our text, which declares: "Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." Oh, what a flood of radiant light do these words throw upon the celebration of this day! "Christ hath abolished death!" Can there be a greater victory? "Christ hath brought life and immortality to light!" Could there be a more joyous message? Let us pray God that our hearts may all experience the blessedness and joy of this Easter-tide as we now speak and hear

#### THE GLAD TIDINGS OF EASTER:

1. *Christ hath abolished death, and*
2. *Christ hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.*

##### 1.

"*Christ hath abolished death!*" How did He do that?—You know the story of death's and the devil's victory over man. In paradise man had disobeyed his wise and kind Creator, and, fascinated by the treacherous words of the seducer, had followed the devil into sin and, with that, into—death. Disobedience to God brought death to man, for "the wages of sin is death." From paradise, the blessed garden of God, man fell into a lion's den ruled by death and the devil. Who could save poor man from the monster that devours him and his children? Jesus Christ undertook to be the Savior of man. He came down into our world of woe and death. He *became one of us*, He took upon Himself our nature, our flesh and blood, was made in our likeness, that for us He might conquer and slay the monster Death. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and *deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage,*" Hebr. 2, 14. 15.

Jesus Christ came into the arena where death had ruled an unconquered fiend, and Jesus Christ assumed that nature, that flesh and blood over which death ruled and upon which death feasted.



He came to meet death in single combat. Death had to meet Christ to conquer or to be conquered. That was the purpose of Christ's coming into this world. Death was the work of the devil, and "for this purpose the Son of man was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil," 1 John 3, 8.

And Christ did more; He assumed the debt for which death was the penalty. "The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all." He who had committed no sin assumed our guilt and said to death: "I have taken man's sin upon myself. Claim its penalty from me, and let man go."

Yea, Jesus challenged death: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again," that is: "Come, let death grasp me, take hold of me as firm as he can hold, and in three days I will be free from his power." Then our Lord assaulted death, attacked him boldly. As a man attacks a wild beast that is carrying off its prey, and tears the victim from its captor, so Jesus fell upon death, and tore victim upon victim from death's jaws. There, in the house of Jairus, Jesus brought the little girl back to life. Death had to drop her at the word of Christ. At the gate of Nain Jesus drove death off, gave life to the young man, and gave him back to his mother. At the grave of Lazarus Jesus brought back from death a victim whom all had given up as a hopeless prey of death and corruption.

But these were only skirmishes, only samples, as it were, of what Christ could do. The great and decisive battle was yet to come. That day of the great decision finally came, the hour of darkness in which Christ and death fought for the mastery. There on that dark hill without the city gate "Jesus was delivered for our offenses," Jesus died for our sins, Jesus threw Himself into the very jaws of death. "I lay down my life," said He, and let death take hold of Him. Jesus died and suffered the penalty of the sins of the world. Divine justice was satisfied, sin was punished according to its deserts. "He was made a curse for us." Christ's disciples were dismayed, and on the verge of despair hell howled with triumph—the Prince of Life who was to abolish and conquer death lay "in death's strong grasp." But the disciples had mourned too soon, and hell had gloried before its time. They did not wait for the third day, for on the third day the Prince of Life turned upon His foe, threw him off, vanquished death, and struck the blow that abolished death, freed Himself and us from death forever. Crucified, dead, buried in a grave, He came forth on Easter morning, victorious, completely and forever victorious, over death and the grave. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—Thus Christ abolished death, thus Christ remained Master of death, thus Christ, who was delivered for our offenses, was raised for our justification. Death has lost its power. Jesus Christ has destroyed the destroyer. Death

is abolished. For Christ, and for all that are Christ's, there is no death. Their sin is gone and forgiven, and thus death cannot claim them. "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." He has obtained for us the victory over death and the grave. Hallelujah!

Hell and its prince, the Devil,  
Now of their power are shorn,  
I now am safe from evil,  
And sin I laugh to scorn;  
*Grim death*, with all his might,  
Cannot my soul affright;  
*He is a powerless form*,  
Howe'er he rage and storm.

## 2.

But what does this victory of Christ mean for us? Is our weal or woe concerned in it? It certainly is. You will see that while we now consider that Christ did not only abolish death, but *brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel*.

This great battle between death and Christ was fought long before any of us were born. The glorious victory by which Christ vanquished death and abolished death's power was gained in a place more than four thousand miles from here. None of us were witnesses of this defeat and abolition of death. We still see men die about us and sink into the grave. If we knew no more than we see with our eyes about us, then death and the fear and terror of death would still rule and tyrannize us. But the Lord Jesus has arranged that we would get the full benefit of all that He did for us. For that very purpose *He gave us the Gospel*. Through this Gospel Jesus sends and offers to the whole world life and immortality. Our text states: "Christ hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." That is, through the Gospel Jesus shows, uncovers, and reveals to all men this treasure which He won by His glorious victory over death. The Gospel brings it to light, so that all may see it and know that it is meant and intended for them, take it, have it, and enjoy it forever. By the Word of Jesus, the message that tells us of His death and glorious resurrection for our justification, by this Word life, eternal life, and liberty from our death, and victory over our grave comes to us, is offered to us, and is made our own.

O how precious is the Gospel! How rich it makes us! It takes from us death, corruption, and hell, and gives us, in its stead, life, happiness, and heaven. Therefore Jesus declares to His disciples in one place (John 6, 63): "*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*" And again He says (John 5, 24): "He that heareth my Word, and believeth . . . hath everlasting life." And



He follows this up by saying (v. 25): "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and *they that hear shall live*," here and hereafter. — The Gospel is not only a sound or a message, it is the vessel that offers to dying man the draught of eternal life! It comes to us as we lie in the clutches of death and tells us: Here, here, quick take, drink, and live forever! It is a word of pardon, and takes away our sin and guilt; it is the key to heaven which unlocks and opens to us the gates of eternal paradise; it is the hand of the Almighty by which He rescues us from the monster death and gives us immortality. On that Easter morn in Judea Christ abolished death for you, and on this Easter morn He offers you life, life and immortality, through the Gospel. Hallelujah! "Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

What a change this Easter message works upon this earth! We have been speaking of our life as a journey from the cradle to the grave. What a dreary, wretched picture of life that is! From a naked birth, through the ills and tears of childhood, the folly and madness of youth, the toil and burdens of our best years, the weakness and uselessness of a second childhood—to sink into the grave, a food for worms! What a discouraging, hopeless view of life that is! But Easter and its message of light have changed all that. Not from the cradle to the grave, but from the cradle *to the gates of paradise* is the believer's pilgrimage! Born of parents flesh of flesh, through the Easter message we are born of God, live in His household of spiritual righteousness, peace, and joy, serve Christ in works of eternal endurance, live upon the manna which the Easter message provides, sing the songs of Zion, and look toward the eternal city as we travel on toward its gates of pearl, its shining light, its blessed assembly of saints and angels. Onward is our life, toward the Lord Himself, to see Him face to face and to inherit that land of promise, that inheritance undefiled, incorruptible, and unfading, which Jesus gained for us when He abolished death, and which He gave to us when He brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. — O Christian, what a splendor of light does the Easter message throw upon our life! It changes our life from a funeral parade to a wedding march of the bride of the King of kings toward the festal halls to meet her most glorious Lord, to live and rejoice with Him in unfading splendor.

What a change has the Easter message wrought among dying mortals! Cursed by sin, enslaved by Satan, tortured by fears of death, the monster carried the sinner off and left wailing and weeping and broken hearts behind. But look at the Christian who has believed the Easter message—look at him meeting death. The peace of God is in his heart and may often be seen upon his very features. Listen, what does he say? "I have a desire to depart and

to be with Christ, which is far better." It is not death to him, it is "going to be with Christ," going through the gates of the eternal and golden city. And look again! Oh, our eyes of flesh cannot see them, but we know they are there at the bedside of the Christian, the angels of heaven, ready to carry his soul to the realm of bliss and joy. Glorious hour, blessed Christian! The messengers of the King are awaiting thy immortal soul. And then—it is over!—the soul has passed hence. What now? He is not dead, see, he sleepeth!

Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,  
From which none ever wakes to weep;  
A calm and undisturbed repose,  
Unbroken by the last of foes.

But do not loved ones weep at the Christian's coffin? Yes, they weep, but not as the others who have no hope. They weep in the pain of parting, and they weep from the joyous hope of meeting again in the palace of the eternal King. They hear the Resurrected say: "I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."—But do they not sink the Christian in the grave? Yes; but listen to what is said at the grave: "Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" It is not a giving up to the grave, it is a triumph over death, grave, and corruption. The Easter message has given life and immortality, for the Christians trust Him who said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." 'Tis true, it is sown in dishonor, but it shall be raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, but it shall be raised in power. Christ shall change our vile body that it may be like unto His glorious body.

The Easter message drives death off as spring drives off the winter, and brings life and immortality to light. What, will you go on hopeless, sad, unbelieving, clinging to this earth and its dust? Come, let the light of Easter, the heavenly song of Christ's victory over death, let it enter your heart to-day. Let the message of this morning give you life and immortality; let it draw you to the side of your heavenly Bridegroom; let it give you the joyous hope and the glad faith of the pilgrims, who are facing heavenward. Join the chorus of the people of God to-day, and repeat: Christ hath abolished death *for me*, and hath brought *to me* life and immortality through the Gospel.

And now unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath for us *abolished death*, and hath



brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen.

Mighty Victor! reign forever,  
Wear the crown so dearly won;  
Never shall Thy people, never,  
Cease to sing what Thou hast done;  
Thou hast fought Thy people's foes;  
Thou hast healed Thy people's woes.

M. S. S.

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## Address to Communicants. X

MATT. 21, 9.

(Special reference to catechumens communing for the first time.)

For ages the Church has sung these words at communion. What is their meaning? They were first shouted as a welcome to Jesus at His entrance into Jerusalem. People, with these words, acknowledged Him their King and paid Him homage. That is their meaning still. In the Holy Supper, in particular, Christ comes to His people invisibly. He is present in the blessed bread and cup. Christian communicants acknowledge His presence with the ancient welcome: "Hosanna, Lord!"

At Jesus' entrance children were heard to join in the hosanna of the multitude. Some were offended and asked Christ to rebuke the children. But Christ defended them, as He had done on another occasion. You, too, my young friends, have ere this at many a communion joined in the Thrice Holy of the communicants, and have particularly helped in singing the hosanna at communions. You have acknowledged Christ your Lord and brought your prayers before Him every time you sang hosanna. But the well-known words mean more to you this morning of your first communion. Jesus has come to you in other ways when you sang hosanna, but He did not come to you in the way He shall come to you to-day for the first time in your lives, and, let me hope, often in the future. You will be admitted to-day to the highest privilege of Christian church-membership. This grace of partaking of the Lord's body and blood is the last which the Church can convey to you. It was kept in store for you since your baptism. Christ desires you to have it, just as He desired you to receive baptism. Infant baptism and young folks' communion are both acceptable to Him. He rebukes neither, as some men do. Therefore, come boldly and confidently. You have a perfect right to come. You have professed Christ before men. Now, let Him also own you publicly as His dear children. And come again! Come often! The grace which you receive this

day for the first time will be held ready for you until your dying day. And you will need it. Do not fail to ask for it.

I need not suggest to you, dear parents and fellow-communicants of these young newcomers at the table of our Lord, that our hosanna should go up with increased fervor to-day. We bring each our own burden of sin. Let us add to-day a concern, a feeling of responsibility, for these young souls. Let our hosanna to-day be a prayer also for strength and prudence to become their guides in the way everlasting.—And now, give your attention to those words which we sing “with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven” at our communion. I shall speak of

### OUR HOSANNA AT COMMUNION,

and show that it is,

1. *a confession;*
2. *a petition.*

#### 1.

At His entrance into Jerusalem Jesus was hailed as “the Son of David.” Not *a* son, not one of the numerous descendants of Israel’s greatest king, though also in that sense Jesus was David’s son, for through Mary, who was of the house and lineage of David, He was in the direct line of descent from David. But Jesus is *the* Son of David, the only One of His kind, the promised Son, for whose coming David himself had prayed, and to whom an eternal kingdom over all the nations of the earth had been promised. He is David’s Son, but David is not His father. He is David’s Son, but David calls Him his Lord. He is the Redeemer, God’s Son made manifest in the flesh. He comes “in the name of the Lord,” in fulfillment of God’s promises and in the power and authority of the great God, to declare God’s name, His mercy and faithfulness, to the children of men. The Jews who sang hosanna to Christ confessed His person and His office.

At the same time they professed themselves His subjects, a portion of that holy nation whom Christ rules. They had waited for His coming with their pious forefathers. Their eyes were blessed with His appearing, and their hearts gladdened with seeing Him come *to them*. They declared themselves ready to receive Him. The Jews who sang hosanna professed their personal faith in Christ and their state of grace.

Both professions must be made by you, beloved communicants, if you are to commune worthily. Your communion is a public declaration that you know and believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and David’s Son. For only if He is both, He has the power to ordain the mystery of this sacramental food, in which He comes to all communicants in a supernatural way by natural means. Your



communion is a public declaration that you know and believe Christ to be the Savior of the world. For only if you acknowledge Him as such, you will also acknowledge His wisdom and mercy in ordaining for your eating and drinking the body and blood in which He wrought your redemption. And your communion is a public declaration that you claim a share in His merits with all other believers, that you know yourselves at one with Him by faith, hail Him as your Redeemer, and His Supper as the food of His disciples, among whom you wish to be numbered.

Can you truthfully set up these claims? That is the question which you will now have to answer in the presence of God and Christ. Do you truly believe that the Sacrament is not a human invention, but a divine institution? that He who instituted it has been given all power in heaven and on earth? that you are this moment in a state of grace and faith, not only have been at your baptism or on the day of your confirmation and first communion? that Christ finds you ready and willing to receive Him? If so, I bid you welcome in His name, and assure you that you are not only coming to Christ, but He is coming to you. A special welcome I extend to you, my dear young friends. Your Savior has known and loved you all these years during which you were preparing for this communion. You are glad that you may now receive orally what you have long received by faith, and that you may now come to Christ also in this way. And He is glad to meet you here, to receive you, to take from you what you bring Him, and to give you what you seek at His hand.

## 2.

What that is the word *hosanna* shows. It is a foreign word; it means: "Help, Lord!" It is a petition. The entire phrase, "*Hosanna in the highest!*" makes the petition more urgent. A great Helper, from on high, is needed. More than human aid is required. If you are to be truly helped, God must do it. There is salvation in none other. Brother cannot help brother in this case. And the wealth of the whole world could not purchase what you crave. What help is needed?

The Jews in the Savior's time had a twofold sorrow: some grieved because they were ruled by the Romans, others grieved because they were ruled by sin. The former sorrow was very small, but it was very great in the estimation of a certain class of Jews, so great that they entirely forgot the other sorrow. The latter sorrow seemed so great to those who were oppressed with it that they did not mind the former. Both sought help at Christ's hands, and both shouted: "*Hosanna!*" But only the latter received what they asked, and their *hosanna* was turned into *hallelujah*, while the former were

disappointed and soon began to cry: "Crucify Him!" Christ is no earthly deliverer, no savior of the body, but of the soul. He strives to make men inwardly free, not outwardly. He desires to make us great in heaven, not on earth. He wants to enrich us, not in money, but in faith and in virtue. He wishes to teach us, not how to enjoy the few years of our young life here in pleasures that are no pleasures (for the end of them is bitter), but how to enjoy endless years of happiness hereafter. This He does by removing from us what is the real cause of our trouble: by forgiving our sin, for which He was delivered, and which had been canceled when He rose again on Easter Day.

To Him, the Victor over sin and all the terrible consequences of sin, you raise your cry of help to-day: "Hosanna! Help, Lord!" You profess that your heart is troubled. You, too, my young friends, have felt the worry that sin, wrongdoing against the holy commandments, causes. You are troubled with the sins of youth. You all claim the Lord for your only helper. He alone can restore your soul, grant you peace of heart, a quiet conscience, and a holy desire and love for His Word and His ways. He alone can defend you against dangers in your Christian conduct, foil the tempter, ward off offense, grant you better zeal in His cause, and comfort you in affliction and over against the ridicule and malice of the unholy people of this wicked world. All that your hosanna expresses. Hosanna means, not: "Lord, help me a little bit!" but: "Lord, help me altogether! I can do nothing. I am but a child. I am foolish, weak, wayward. I cannot do one thing exactly as God would have me do it! I do not even know how often I sin!"

Now, is this your sincere meaning? Do you plead guilty of all sins, even of those which you do not know? Do you truly wish to be rid of them? Do you really seek at Christ's hands nothing else than forgiveness and peace with your Father in heaven? no earthly gain or honor? Behold, Christ comes to you, the Conqueror over sin, bringing a free and full pardon; His open and empty tomb means God's release from guilt and punishment to every sinner. He comes to you to absolve you from all your sins, and to seal to you God's forgiveness with His own body and blood which purchased for you this great redemption. His answer to your hosanna comes to you in the absolution and in the Eucharist, and it says: "According to thy faith be it done unto thee!"

May the mercy of the Lord, which has brought you hither, attend you hence and glorify the grace of His dear Son in you in all knowledge, and wisdom, and faith, and love, now and evermore. Amen.

D.

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